

Endorsements of the Antelope Valley Alignment From:

- **Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors**
- **Mayor of Los Angeles**
- **Los Angeles City Council**
- **Kern County Board of Supervisors**
- **Los Angeles World Airports Commissioners**
- **Senator Wm. J. ("Pete") Knight**
- **Assemblyman George Runner**

October 26, 2001

HLB Decision Economics, Inc.

**The Antelope Valley HSR Alignment:
The Best Choice for California**

The Antelope Valley Alignment...

...is most consistent with federal, state, and local planning principles, including those of the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

October 26, 2001

HLB Decision Economics, Inc.

The Antelope Valley Alignment...

...provides the greatest connectivity with other transportation resources, including the Palmdale Regional Airport.

...provides access to an area expected to grow at least three times faster than Southern California as a whole.

The Antelope Valley Alignment...

...will produce greater net benefits to the region and state, *while at the same time*

...will reduce the risk of (1) lower-than-expected ridership, and (2) higher-than-estimated construction cost and schedule delay.

The Antelope Valley Alignment...

...will have the least overall impact on key environmental and socioeconomic resources.

...enjoys unanimous support by Southern California and Central Valley elected officials, business groups, and other public interest organizations.

**The Antelope Valley HSR Alignment:
The Best Choice for California**

Our Recommendation to the California High-Speed Rail Authority:

That the Authority adopt the Antelope Valley Alignment as its preferred (baseline) routing between Bakersfield and Sylmar.

October 26, 2001

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ANTELOPE VALLEY:

The Sensible Route Choice For California's High Speed Train Project

An Update & Overview of the California High Speed Train Project

With an estimated price tag of more than \$35 billion, the California High Speed Train Project (CHST) – conceived a decade ago to whisk passengers from the San Francisco Bay Area to Los Angeles in under three hours – is the single largest public works project ever proposed in the United States. After a decade of planning, the CHST faces several critical milestones in the coming months. The High Speed Rail Authority will determine whether California can build and operate a high-speed rail system that can provide a reliable, cost-effective alternative to air and vehicle travel and decide specifically which population centers the line would serve. Based on objective criteria, it is clear that the most sensible route from the Bay Area to Los Angeles must include the Antelope Valley.

Although the rail project would not be completed until 2020, the decisions being made by the High Speed Rail Authority and the public will affect the viability, costs and benefits of the project and could shape the future of transportation in California for decades. These decisions will hinge on the following issues:

- ♦ **Selection of a final route.** The California High Speed Rail Authority continues to review proposed routes. The final choice of route will have significant implications for California's citizens, economy and environment.
- ♦ **Environmental Impact Report.** Public hearings over the next 2 months allow citizens to comment on the draft EIR released on January 27th, which assesses the environmental effects of the project. Then, the HSRA will release a final EIR, which may indicate preferred routes.
- ♦ **Funding.** Californians must determine how to fund the project, beginning with a vote on a \$9.95 billion general obligation bond to fund the project's first leg.

Antelope Valley Route Better Serves Southern California – and the State

First and foremost among the decisions to be made is the final selection of the route in the Southern California segment of the CHST. Two routes connecting Bakersfield and Los Angeles are currently being considered. One would pass through the Antelope Valley, the other through the Grapevine/I-5 corridor. The state law that created the CHST requires that the route be selected based on criteria that include which route offers the best links to important population centers, which would attract the highest ridership and which is the most cost-effective. The Antelope Valley alignment wins on all counts. It offers a more logical and compelling choice for a variety of reasons and is supported by a broad cross section of Southern California community, business and political leaders. Although the I-5 route is marginally faster (by six to nine minutes on a two hour and thirty minute trip), the Antelope Valley alternative provides a wide range of important advantages that far outweigh the slight increase in travel time.

The Antelope Valley Route:

Links Important Population Centers

- ♦ The Antelope Valley Route would serve 750,000 more residents and 260,000 more employees than the virtually unpopulated Grapevine route (SCAG 2020 projections).
- ♦ The Antelope Valley is one of the fastest growing population centers in the state. Its population of over 350,000 people is projected to more than double by 2020, spurred by job growth and Southern California's most affordable housing.

Serves Important Business Centers

- ♦ Businesses ranging from start-ups to national corporations, employing a workforce of over 260,000 (SCAG 2020 projections).
- ♦ Continued growth with abundant tracts of the most affordable industrial land in California and a friendly business environment (California Business Magazine named the Antelope Valley the "Best Place to Do Business" in the state).

Relieves Southern California's Airport and Freeway Congestion

- ♦ Palmdale Regional Airport – owned by the City of Los Angeles – is expected to be developed into a major airport serving Southern California to relieve congestion at LAX and other regional airports.
- ♦ A high speed rail system would connect the airport to Los Angeles and other Southland residents and businesses.
- ♦ A high speed rail line linking the Antelope Valley with downtown Los Angeles would relieve traffic congestion on the I-5 and SR-14 Freeways and significantly alleviate a problematic truck and car bottleneck hazard.

Makes Better Economic Sense

- ♦ Generates greater ridership revenues from an additional 750,000 residents and 260,000 employees in the area (SCAG 2020 projections).
- ♦ Results in projected \$900 million more in net benefits than the I-5 Grapevine route over the first 33 years of operation.

Cheaper, Faster, Safer to Build

- ♦ Construction time is expected to be half that of the Grapevine route.
- ♦ Cost is 15% to 40% lower.
- ♦ Ground conditions involve less construction and financial risk than the Grapevine.
- ♦ Earthquake hazards are significantly lower than the Grapevine alignment.

A Short Timeline of the California High Speed Rail

In 1993 the State Legislature created the California High Speed Rail Commission to study the feasibility of a California High Speed Rail system.

In 1996 California passed the California High-Speed Rail Act that authorized the state to prepare a high-speed intercity rail plan “similar to California’s former freeway plan” that would “generate jobs and economic growth.”

In 1998 Senate Bill 1420 created the nine-member California High Speed Rail Authority to replace the Commission to finalize a system plan (route, technology, and funding) and to undertake final engineering and implementation.

In 2000 The Authority issued a business plan envisioning a 700-mile-long high-speed train system capable of speeds in excess of 200 miles per hour serving the major metropolitan centers of California in 2020 with a cost of \$27 billion.

In 2002 Senate Bill 1856 authorized a \$9.95 billion general obligation bond for the November 2004 ballot, with \$9 billion earmarked for construction of the San Francisco to Los Angeles segment of the high-speed train system, and \$950 million for feeder rail programs.

In 2004 In January, a Draft Environmental Impact Report (including both the Grapevine and Palmdale routes) was released by the Authority. Public Hearings are currently being conducted throughout the state.

Conclusion: Antelope Valley Route is the *Best Choice* for California

Californians deserve to have an efficient, high-speed ground transportation system that maximizes the use of their tax dollars. The best route through Southern California is obvious. By adding just a few minutes to the total trip time, Southern Californians will have a high-speed rail alternative that will serve more people – where they live and work - while connecting major commercial centers and the region’s next major airport. **The Antelope Valley route is cheaper and less risky to build, and would attract greater use, generate greater revenues, and reduce the cost for California taxpayers.** The Antelope Valley is the clear path for California’s High Speed Rail to serve Southern California.